

CIRM Launches Program to Create Teams of the Best Scientific Minds in California And Across the World to Accelerate the Development of Therapies

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San Francisco, Calif., February 13, 2009 – The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, the state stem cell agency, today launched an innovative model for building interdisciplinary research teams within California and around the world that will collaborate to accelerate the development of therapies for a specific disease or injury.

Earlier this year, the Agency's governing board, the Independent Citizen's Oversight Committee, allocated up to \$210 million for the program announced today with a formal request for applications from the research community. CIRM expects to fund 10 to 12 Disease Team grants of up to \$20 million each. Successful applicants will need to show CIRM's panel of out-of-state expert reviewers that they have a reasonable chance of advancing a therapy to the point of filing an Investigational New Drug Application with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration within four years, which is the longevity of the grants.

California researchers have the option of building the interdisciplinary team needed to achieve this aggressive goal with just fellow Californians or seeking additional expertise in Canada, Spain, or the United Kingdom who can seek support from CIRM's Collaborative Funding Partner program. Government research agencies in each of those countries have committed significant resources to funding disease team members in their nation:

- The Canadian Cancer Stem Cell Consortium has committed up to 40 million Canadian dollars (\$32.3 million) to fund two Canadian teams;
- the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN) has committed up to 10 million Euros (\$12.9 million) for Spanish teams; and
- the United Kingdom's Medical Research Council (MRC) has committed up to five million British pounds (\$7.2 million) for teams in the UK.

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"California is committed to being a leader in stem cell research, but no one state or nation should do this alone," stated Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. "Entering into collaborations such as these, which bring together leading medical researchers from around the globe, have a great potential in improving the lives of not only Californians, but all the people around the world."

"Critical solutions to the major diseases will require a global effort; we can no longer do it by ourselves; we must have a global commitment," said Dr. Alan Trounson, president of CIRM.

Researchers teams must submit a brief "pre-application" by March 26, which will be reviewed by CIRM's internal scientific staff along with outside experts, and in mid-May a subset will be invited to complete a full application which will be due July 16. Funding decisions from the CIRM governing board are expected this fall with the first round of checks going to the research teams in December.

Because of the state Budget crisis, CIRM is working with the State treasurer's office on a private placement of \$200 million in general obligation bonds this year and \$200 million again next year.

"These Disease Team grants and loans are a top priority, if we are to drive discoveries into the clinic and to patients," said governing board chair Robert Klein. "The \$210 million in California funding, partnered with over \$50 million in international funding, will bring many of the world's best and brightest scientists and clinicians together to advance therapies in the global fight against chronic disease."

About CIRM CIRM was established in early 2005 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide

ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. To date, the CIRM governing board has approved 279 research and facility grants totaling more than \$693 million, making CIRM the largest source of funding for human embryonic stem cell research in the world. For more information, please visit www.cirm.ca.gov.

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